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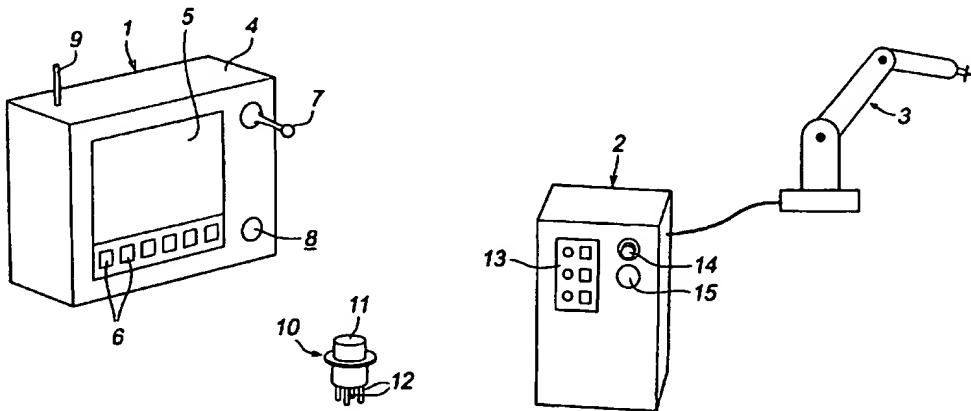
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(54) Title: AN INDUSTRIAL ROBOT



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(57) Abstract: An industrial robot comprising a manipulator (3), a control unit (2) for controlling the manipulator, a portable operating unit (1) for teaching and manually operating the robot, which operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control unit, and an emergency stop unit (10). The emergency stop unit (10) is arranged movable and the portable operating unit (1) comprises a first receiving member (8) for receiving the emergency stop unit.

5 AN INDUSTRIAL ROBOT

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to an industrial robot comprising a manipulator, a control unit for controlling the manipulator, a portable operating unit for teaching and manually operating the robot, which operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control unit, and an emergency stop unit for stopping the manipulator upon activating it.

15 The present invention also relates to an industrial robot system comprising a plurality of industrial robots, each having a manipulator, a control unit for controlling the manipulator and an emergency stop unit for stopping the manipulator upon activating it, and at least one portable operating unit for teaching and programming the robots, which portable operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control units.

20 The present invention further relates to a portable operating unit for an industrial robot having a manipulator and a control unit for controlling the manipulator, the operating unit comprising means for manually operating the robot and means for wireless communicating with the control unit.

25 The present invention further relates to a method for controlling the functioning of an emergency stop unit for an industrial robot comprising a manipulator, a control unit for controlling the manipulator, and a portable operating unit for teaching and manually operating the robot, which portable operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control unit.

30 The present invention further relates to a method for controlling the functioning of an emergency stop unit for an industrial robot comprising a manipulator, a control unit for controlling the manipulator, and a portable operating unit for teaching and manually operating the robot, which portable operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control unit.

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The invention also relates to the use of an industrial robot for operation control of a spot welding station.

5 A portable operating unit is generally denoted a teach pendant, and is used for manually controlling the robot, for example to teach or program the robot to follow an operating path.

PRIOR ART

10 Robots are used to carry out repetitious and precise tasks, such as welding and painting of components. The robots are programmed to carry out a work or a work cycle along an operating path. In order to program or teach the robot its working cycle, the robot is manipulated to various positions along the desired 15 operating path. These positions are stored as instructions in a memory in the control unit. Other information, such as desired robot movement velocity, may also be stored in the memory. During operation of the robot, the program instructions are executed, thereby making the robot operate as desired.

20 Various devices used to facilitate the programming of robots are known in the art. For example U.S. Pat. No. 4,888,708 issued to Brantmark et al discloses a portable teach pendant, for teaching and manually operating the robot, by use of a joystick, a keyboard, and a visual display unit. The keyboard has various function keys which permit an operator to select different states for the control system. The teach pendant may for example be used for monitoring the robot program, changing certain variables in the program, starting, stopping and editing the program, and for 25 manually moving the manipulator by use of the joystick. The operator is teaching the robot while watching the motion of the manipulator.

30 A robot can be operated in at least two modes: automatic and 35 manual. The choice of mode, in which the robot shall operate, is made by switching a mode selector key on a control panel on

the control unit. When the robot is in the manual mode, the teach pendant has the exclusive right to operate the robot and thus no other operating units are allowed to control the robot. When the robot is in the automatic mode, some of the functions 5 in the teach pendant are blocked, for example the functioning of the joystick.

The teach pendant disclosed in the above mentioned U.S. patent is connected to the control unit via a flexible cable or wire. 10 There are many problems related to having a cable between the control unit and the teach pendant, particularly when there are several robots arranged near each other in a robot line. The cable between the teach pendant and the control unit has to be rather long and the risk for twisting the cables of the robots is 15 considerable. Neighboring robots could also have their cables twisted with each other and thus it is sometimes difficult to know to which robot a certain teach pendant belongs. There is also a risk for breakage of the cables resulting in loss of communication between the teach pendant and the control unit.

20 From the German patent No. DE 195 36 293 it is known to use a wireless link for exchange of information between the teach pendant and the robot. One advantage with a wireless connection between the robot and the teach pendant is the possibility 25 of using the same teach pendant for several robots. Accordingly, the teach pendant does not belong to a certain robot, and may be used together with any of the robots in a robot cell.

30 Robots are usually placed in robot cells in order to facilitate the automation of a complex series of actions. When one of the robots in a robot cell is to be placed under manual control using a wireless teach pendant, it is important that the teach pendant is 35 communicating with and controlling the correct robot. It must be possible to ensure correct association between the wireless teach pendant and the control unit. Otherwise, there is a risk for personal injury, should the operator believe that he is operating

a certain robot but is instead operating another robot in the cell. Thus, a problem arising when using a teach pendant not physically connected with the robot, is how to ensure that the correct robot is connected with the teach pendant.

5

Another problem with wireless communication between the robot and the teach pendant is the functioning of the emergency stop button on the teach pendant when the teach pendant is not connected with any robot. For safety reasons it is required that a 10 visible emergency stop button stops the robot at any time the button is pushed. Accordingly, the teach pendant is not allowed to have a visible emergency stop button when it is not connected to any of the robots.

15 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The object of the present invention is to provide an industrial robot having a wireless operating unit which overcomes the problems mentioned above and in particular the problem in connection with the functioning of the emergency stop button.

This object is achieved by means of the initially defined industrial robot, characterised in that said emergency stop unit is arranged movable and the portable operating unit comprises a first 25 receiving member for receiving the emergency stop unit. Preferably, the emergency stop unit comprises an emergency stop button. Such movable emergency stop unit makes it possible to remove the emergency stop button from the operating unit, when the operating unit is not connected to any robot, and then return 30 the emergency stop button to the operating unit when the operating unit is connected to a robot. Accordingly, it is ensured that if the operating unit has a visible emergency stop button, the emergency stop button will function.

35 According to an embodiment of the invention, the robot comprises a second receiving member for receiving the emergency

stop unit, arranged at or in connection with the control unit. Preferably, the control unit comprises means for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit and means for enabling the emergency stop unit upon presence in the second receiving 5 member and the portable operating unit comprises means for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit and means for enabling the emergency stop unit upon presence in the operating unit. For safety reasons, it is important that the emergency stop button always works, even when it is not used in the operating 10 unit. To ensure that the emergency stop button always functions, the emergency stop button is moved to a second receiving member in connection with the control unit when it is not used in the operating unit. The emergency stop button is enabled when the emergency stop unit has been received, either 15 by the first receiving member or by the second receiving member.

According to a further embodiment of the invention, said movable emergency stop unit comprises means for carrying information about the identity of the robot, and the portable operating unit comprises means for reading the robot identity from the emergency stop unit. To ensure that the emergency stop button on the operator unit, upon activation, deactivates the correct robot, an identification of the robot is transmitted to the operating 20 unit together with the movable emergency button. Accordingly, it is possible to ensure correct association between the wireless operating unit and the control unit of the robot and the risk for emergency stopping the wrong robot is reduced.

25 30 According to a further embodiment of the invention the control unit comprises means for comparing the identity of the robot with the identity carried by the emergency stop unit and determining whether the identities are equal. A problem associated with having a movable emergency stop unit is the risk for returning the emergency stop unit to the wrong robot. This prob- 35

lem is solved by providing the control unit with means for checking the identity of a received emergency stop unit.

According to a further embodiment of the invention the portable operating unit comprises means for establishing a communication with the control unit of the identified robot. A communication between the operating unit and the control unit of a robot cannot be established until the operating unit has received information about the identity of the robot, to which it shall be associated.

5 Since the identification of the robot is transferred together with the emergency stop unit, no communication could be established until the emergency stop unit is present in the operating unit. Thus, the operating unit is not able to control the robot if the emergency stop button is not present. When a communication is established with the control unit, the control unit knows 10 that the operating unit has received the emergency stop button.

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According to a further embodiment of the invention, the communication between the portable operating unit and the control unit is carried out via a base station and the movable emergency stop unit comprises means for carrying information about the address of the base station. To facilitate the establishment of 20 the communication between the portable operating unit and the control unit, the address of the base station is transferred to the operating unit through the emergency stop unit. For a robot cell, having several robots connected to a base station, the number 25 of emergency stop units could be the same as the number of robots in the cell. The emergency stop units will all have the same base station address, but different robot identities.

30 According to a further embodiment of the invention the control unit comprises means for measuring the time elapsed between the point of time when the emergency stop unit is removed from the second receiving member until a communication is established 35 between the portable operating unit and the control unit. Preferably, the control unit comprises means for comparing said

time with a predetermined maximum time and activating the emergency stop unit depending on the result of said comparison. For the purpose of detecting a loss of the emergency stop unit, a timer is started upon removal of the emergency stop unit

5 from the control unit. The timer is stopped when the emergency stop unit is received by the operating unit and the communication is established. If the time exceeds a predetermined maximum time, an emergency stop of the robot is executed.

10 According to a further embodiment of the invention, the movable emergency stop unit comprises an electronic hardware device, for example an information storage device. According to a further embodiment of the invention, the movable emergency stop unit comprises a processor.

15 According to a further embodiment of the invention, the control unit comprises means for detecting lack of robot identity in the emergency stop unit and means for transferring the identity of the robot to the emergency stop unit. Preferably, the control unit

20 also comprises means for detecting lack of robot identity in the control unit itself and means for transferring the identity of the robot from the emergency stop unit to the control unit.

25 A further object of the invention is to provide an industrial robot system having a plurality of robots and at least one wireless operating unit which could operate anyone of the robots, if correctly associated with it, which robot system overcomes the problems mentioned above and in particular the problem in connection with the functioning of the emergency stop button. This

30 object is achieved by the robot system as defined in claim 15.

35 Another object of the invention is to provide a wireless portable operating unit overcoming the problem in connection with the functioning of the emergency stop button. This object is achieved by the operating unit as defined in claim 20.

Another object of the invention is to provide a method for ensuring the functioning of an emergency stop unit for an industrial robot. This object is achieved by the method of the invention as defined in claim 25.

5

Many of the above mentioned means are effectuated by software instruction run on a processor in the operating unit or on a processor in the control unit.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will now be explained more closely by the description of different embodiments thereof and with reference to the appended drawings.

15

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an industrial robot according to one embodiment of the invention, comprising an operating unit adapted for wireless communication with a control unit of the robot.

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Fig. 2 is a block diagram of the operating unit according to one embodiment of the invention.

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Fig. 3 is a block diagram of the control unit of an industrial robot according to one embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 4 shows an industrial robot system according to one embodiment of the invention, comprising an operating unit in wireless communication with the robots.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Figure 1 shows an industrial robot according to the invention, comprising a portable operating unit 1 and a control unit 2 coupled for transmitting data via a communication cable or a link to

a manipulator 3. The operating unit and the control unit are adapted for radio communication with each other. The control unit 2 is capable of receiving, processing and outputting data sent to it from the operating unit. The operating unit 1 comprises a body 5 4, a display screen 5 and a set of function keys 6, and a joystick 7. The function keys 6 permit an operator to select various states for the control system. The joystick is used for controlling the movement of the manipulator when the robot is manually operated and could be used as a mouse. The operating unit 10 1 further comprises an antenna 9 for radio communication with the control unit 2 and an opening 8 adapted for receiving a movable emergency stop unit 10. The control unit 2 comprises an operator panel 13 having keys for setting the control unit, an emergency stop button 14 and an opening 15 adapted for receiving 15 the movable emergency stop unit 10.

Figure 2 shows the operating unit 1 having received the movable emergency stop unit 10. At least a part of the emergency stop unit 10 is inserted into the opening 8. The emergency stop unit 20 10 includes an emergency stop button 11 and contact elements 12 adapted for being in electrical contact with corresponding contact elements 20 on a receiving member 21 positioned inside the operating unit 1. The emergency stop unit 10 further comprises an electronic hardware device 22 including a memory or a 25 register adapted for storing information about the identity of the robot, to which the emergency stop unit belongs. The receiving member 21 is adapted for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit 10 in the operating unit and reading information about the robot identity from the hardware device 22 to a data bus 23. The robot is arranged so that, the power supply to the manipulator is broken upon pushing the emergency stop button 11. When the emergency stop unit 10 is received in the operating unit 1, the button 11 is enabled and will trigger an emergency stop if activated. The enabling of the emergency stop 30 button is effectuated by software instruction run on the processor unit 24.

When the operating unit 1 has received the emergency stop unit 10, the contact elements 12 of the emergency stop unit 10 and the contact elements 20 of the receiving member 21 are in electrical contact with each other. Information about the identity of the robot is transmitted from the hardware device 22 to the data bus 23 by the receiving member 21. The operating unit 1 further comprises a processing unit 24 adapted for processing data programs for controlling the function of the operating unit, a memory 25 for storing the data programs and the information about the robot identity, interface means 26 for coupling input and output signals between the data bus 23 and the display screen 5, the function keys 6 and the joystick 7, and a coupling element 27 for converting and coupling data between the antenna 9 and the data bus 23.

Figure 3 shows the control unit 2 having received the movable emergency stop unit 10. At least a part of the emergency stop unit 10 is inserted into the opening 15. The contact elements 12 of the emergency stop unit 10 are adapted for being in electrical contact with corresponding contact elements 30 on a receiving member 31 positioned inside the control unit. The receiving member 31 is adapted for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit 10 in the control unit 2 and reading the information about the robot identity from the hardware device 22 in the emergency stop unit 10 to the data bus 32. The control unit 1 further comprises a processing unit 33, a memory 34 for storing data programs and parameters, a first interface means 35 for transmitting input and output signals between the data bus 32 and the operator panel 13, a coupling element 36 for converting and coupling data between an antenna 39 and the data bus 32, and a second interface means 38 for transmitting data and control signals between the data bus 32 and the manipulator. The control unit 1 also includes a timer unit 37, discussed below.

When the emergency stop unit 10 is received by the control unit 2, the emergency stop button 11 is enabled, i.e. upon pushing the emergency stop button 11 the power supply to the manipulator is broken. The enabling of the emergency stop button is 5 effectuated by software instruction run on the processor unit 33. Thus, the control unit has two working emergency stop buttons 10, 14. The control unit needs two emergency stop buttons for ensuring that it always is provided with a stop button, even though one of them is moved to the operating unit.

10 When the operating unit 1 is not used, the emergency stop unit 10 is positioned at the control unit 2. If an operator decides to use the operating unit, he moves the emergency stop unit 10 to the operating unit 1. The receiving member 21 senses the presence 15 of the emergency stop unit 10 and reads the information about the robot identity from the hardware device 22 and transmits it, via the data bus 23, to the processor unit 24. When the processor unit has received the information about the robot identity, it establishes a radio contact with the control unit 2 of 20 the identified robot, via the coupling element 27 and the antenna 9.

When the operating unit 1 is not to be used, the emergency stop unit 10 is returned to the control unit 2 and remains there until 25 the next time the operating unit 1 is to be used. When the receiving member 31 in the control unit has sensed the presence of the emergency stop unit 10, it transmits the information about the robot identity from the hardware device 22, via the data bus 32, to the processor unit 33. When the processor unit 33 has received the information about the robot identity, it compares it 30 with a stored robot identity, for the purpose of checking that the received emergency stop unit is the correct one, belonging to the robot. If the identities are not the same, the control unit will not accept receiving the emergency stop unit and will generate 35 an alarm signal.

For the purpose of detecting a loss of the emergency stop unit 10, the timer unit 37 is started when the emergency stop unit 10 is removed from the control unit 2 and is stopped when the emergency stop button is received by the operating unit 1 and

5 the communication is established. When the timer runs out, i.e. when the time elapsed exceeds a predetermined maximum value, an emergency stop is executed or any other action is taken.

10 The robot may be operated in an automatic or a manual mode. Normally, the robot is in the automatic mode during work and in the manual mode during teaching. In an embodiment of the invention, the switching between the automatic and the manual mode could be effected by moving the emergency stop unit from

15 the control unit to the operating unit and vice versa. Accordingly, upon sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit in the control unit, the robot is operated in automatic mode, i.e. the robot is under automatic control, and upon sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit in the operating unit, the robot is operated in the manual mode, i.e. the robot is controlled by the operating unit.

Figure 4 shows a robot cell having six robots, each comprising a manipulator 3a-3f and a control unit 2a-2f. Each robot can be controlled via a portable operating unit 1. The control units 2a-2f and the operating unit 1 are adapted for being in radio communication with each other via a base station 40. For activating the operating unit 1 it needs to have the address to the base station 40 and the identity of the robot to which it shall be connected.

25 This is done by moving the movable emergency stop unit from the selected robot to the operating unit. Beside the robot identity, the hardware unit 22 comprises the address to the base station. The robot identity includes the network address of the robot to be controlled by the operating unit. The six emergency stop units 10a-10f have the same base station address but different robot identities. In the example shown in figure 4, the ro-

bot comprising controller 2d is selected for being controlled by the operating unit 1. Thus, the emergency stop button 10d is moved to the operating unit 1.

- 5 Each of the robots in the cell has an emergency stop unit. If the cell comprises more than one operating unit 1, the emergency stop units can be used in any of the operating units, but the control units will only accept one unique emergency stop unit. The linking between a robot and an operating unit is done by
- 10 use of the movable emergency stop button. Any number of operating units can be active in the cell, but the only operating unit able to manipulate the robot is the one in possession of its emergency stop button.
- 15 Upon return of the emergency stop unit 10d to the control unit 2d, the operating unit 1 will send a message to the control unit informing it about the fact that the emergency stop unit has been removed from the operating unit. This will stop the manipulator and start the timer in the control unit. The timer is stopped when
- 20 the control unit has received the emergency stop unit. If the transfer time exceeds a predetermined value, the emergency stop will be activated. If it is not possible to communicate with the control unit when the emergency stop unit is removed from the operating unit, the manipulator is stopped from the moment
- 25 the communication is broken, until the control unit has received the emergency stop unit.

As long as the emergency stop unit is not present in the control unit, the communication with the operating unit is supervised

- 30 and the control unit will emergency stop the robot if the communication is broken and the emergency stop unit is not returned within a predetermined time interval. The communication can for example be broken if the operating unit leaves the radio coverage area. Thus, if the emergency stop unit is still in the operating unit when the operating unit leaves the radio coverage area, the robot will be emergency stopped.
- 35

For safety reasons it is sometimes desirable to emergency stop some, or all of the robots in a robot cell or in the same working area, upon activation of the emergency stop button on the operating unit. Accordingly, in an embodiment of the invention the emergency stop unit is adapted for comprising further information about identities of robots which shall be emergency stopped at the same time upon activation of the emergency stop button.

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10 In another embodiment of the invention, the emergency stop unit comprises a first part fixedly arranged in the control unit and a second movable part. The second movable part is used for message encryption and the first part is used for message decryption.

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15 The present invention is not limited to the embodiments disclosed but may be varied and modified within the scope of the following claims. For example, the means for carrying information about the identity of the robot could be implemented in a

20 number of different ways, such as a physical key device, magnetic means, or visible information. The means for reading the robot identity from the emergency stop unit could for example be a mechanical, magnetic or optical reading means. The electronic hardware device in the emergency stop unit is preferably comprising a processor and software instructions.

25

CLAIMS

1. An industrial robot comprising a manipulator (3), a control unit (2) for controlling the manipulator, a portable operating unit 5 (1) for teaching and manually operating the robot, which operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control unit, and an emergency stop unit (10), characterized in that said emergency stop unit (10) is arranged movable and the portable operating unit (1) comprises a first receiving member (8,21) for 10 receiving the emergency stop unit.
2. An industrial robot according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises a second receiving member (15, 30) for receiving the emergency stop unit (10), arranged at or in connection 15 with the control unit (2).
3. An industrial robot according to claim 2, characterized in that the control unit (2) comprises means (31) for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit (10) and means for enabling the emergency stop unit upon presence in the second receiving member. 20
4. An industrial robot according to any of the previous claims, characterized in that the portable operating unit (1) comprises means (21) for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit (10) and means for enabling the emergency stop unit upon presence in the operating unit. 25
5. An industrial robot according to any of the previous claims, 30 characterized in that said movable emergency stop unit (10) comprises means (22) for carrying information about the identity of the robot and the portable operating unit (1) comprises means (21) for reading the robot identity from the emergency stop unit.
- 35 6. An industrial robot according to claims 2 and 5, characterized in that the control unit (2) comprises means for comparing the

identity of the robot with the identity carried by the emergency stop unit (10) and determining whether the identities are equal.

7. An industrial robot according to claim 5 or 6, characterized in that the portable operating unit (1) comprises means (9, 27) for establishing a communication with the control unit of the identified robot.
8. An industrial robot according to claim 7, characterized in that the communication between the portable operating unit (1) and the control unit (2) is carried out via a base station (40) and the movable emergency stop unit (10) comprises means (22) for carrying information about the address of the base station.
9. An industrial robot according to claim 2, characterized in that the control unit (2) comprises means (37) for measuring the time elapsed between the point of time when the emergency stop unit is removed from the second receiving member until a communication is established between the portable operating unit and the control unit.
10. An industrial robot according to claim 9, characterized in that the control unit (2) comprises means for comparing said time with a predetermined maximum time and activating the emergency stop unit depending on the result of said comparison.
11. An industrial robot according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the movable emergency stop unit comprises an electronic hardware device (22).
12. An industrial robot according to claim 11, characterized in that the electronic hardware device comprises a processor.
13. An industrial robot according to claim 5, characterized in that the control unit comprises means for detecting lack of robot

identity in the emergency stop unit and means for transferring the identity of the robot to the emergency stop unit.

14. An industrial robot according to claim 5, characterized in that the control unit comprises means for detecting lack of robot identity in the control unit itself and means for transferring the identity of the robot from the emergency stop unit to the control unit.
- 10 15. An industrial robot system comprising a plurality of industrial robots, each having a manipulator (3a-3f), a control unit (2a-2f) for controlling the manipulator and an emergency stop unit (10a-10f), and at least one portable operating unit (1) for teaching and programming the robots, which portable operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control units, characterized in that at least one of the emergency stop units are movably arranged and the portable operating unit is adapted for receiving the movable emergency stop unit.
- 15 20 16. An industrial robot system according to claim 15, characterized in that said portable operating unit (1) comprises means (20) for sensing the presence of the emergency stop unit (10) and means for enabling the emergency stop unit in presence of the emergency stop unit in the operating unit.
- 25 30 35 17. An industrial robot system according to claim 15 or 16, characterized in that said movable emergency stop unit (10) is adapted for carrying information about the identity of the robot to which it belongs and said portable operating unit (1) comprises means (21) for reading the robot identity from the emergency stop unit (10) and means (9, 27) for establishing a communication with the control unit (2) of the identified robot.
18. An industrial robot system according to claim 17, characterized in that the emergency stop unit (10) is adapted for comprising information about the identity of at least one further ro-

bot in the system which shall be emergency stopped upon activation of the emergency stop button.

19. An industrial robot system according to claim 17 or 18,
5 characterized in that each of the robots comprises a movable emergency stop unit (10) and the robots comprise means (31) for receiving the emergency stop unit and means for determining whether the received emergency stop unit carries the same identification as the robot.
- 10 20. A movable unit (1) for an industrial robot having a manipulator (3) and a control unit (2) for controlling the manipulator, the operating unit comprising means (6, 7) for manually operating the robot and means for wireless communicating with the
15 control unit, characterized in that the operating unit further comprises a member (21) for receiving an movable emergency stop unit (10).
- 20 21. An operating unit according to claim 20, characterized in that it comprises means for comparing the identity of the robot with the identity carried by the emergency stop unit (10) and determining whether the identities are equal.
- 25 22. An operating unit according to claim 20 or 21, characterized in that the operating unit (1) comprises means (21) for reading information about the robot identity from the emergency stop unit.
- 30 23. An operating unit according to claim 22, characterized in that it comprises means for displaying said robot identity received from the emergency stop unit.
- 35 24. An operating unit according to any of the claims 22-23, characterized in that it comprises means (9, 27) for establishing a wireless communication with the control unit of the identified robot.

25. A method for ensuring the functioning of an emergency stop unit (10) for an industrial robot comprising a manipulator (3), a control unit (2) for controlling the manipulator (3), and a portable operating unit (1) for teaching and manually operating the robot, which portable operating unit is adapted for wireless communication with the control unit, characterized in that the method comprises the steps of moving the emergency stop unit (10), from a place at or in connection with the control unit to the portable operating unit (1) and enabling the emergency stop unit upon receiving the emergency stop unit in the operating unit.
26. A method according to claim 25, comprising the step of transmitting information about the identity of the robot from the emergency stop unit to the portable operating unit.
27. A method according to claim 25 or 26, comprising the step of establishing a wireless communication between the operating unit and the control unit of the identified robot when the portable operating unit has received the information about the robot identity.
28. A method according to claim 27, comprising the step of measuring the time elapsed between the point of time when the emergency stop unit is being removed from the place at or in connection with the control unit until said communication is established between the operating unit and the control unit.
29. A method according to any of the claims 25-28, comprising the step of moving the emergency stop unit from the operating unit to said place at or in connection with the control unit and checking whether the received emergency stop unit carries the same identification as the robot connected to the control unit.
30. Use of an industrial robot according to any of the claims 1-14 for operation control at a spot welding station.

1/3

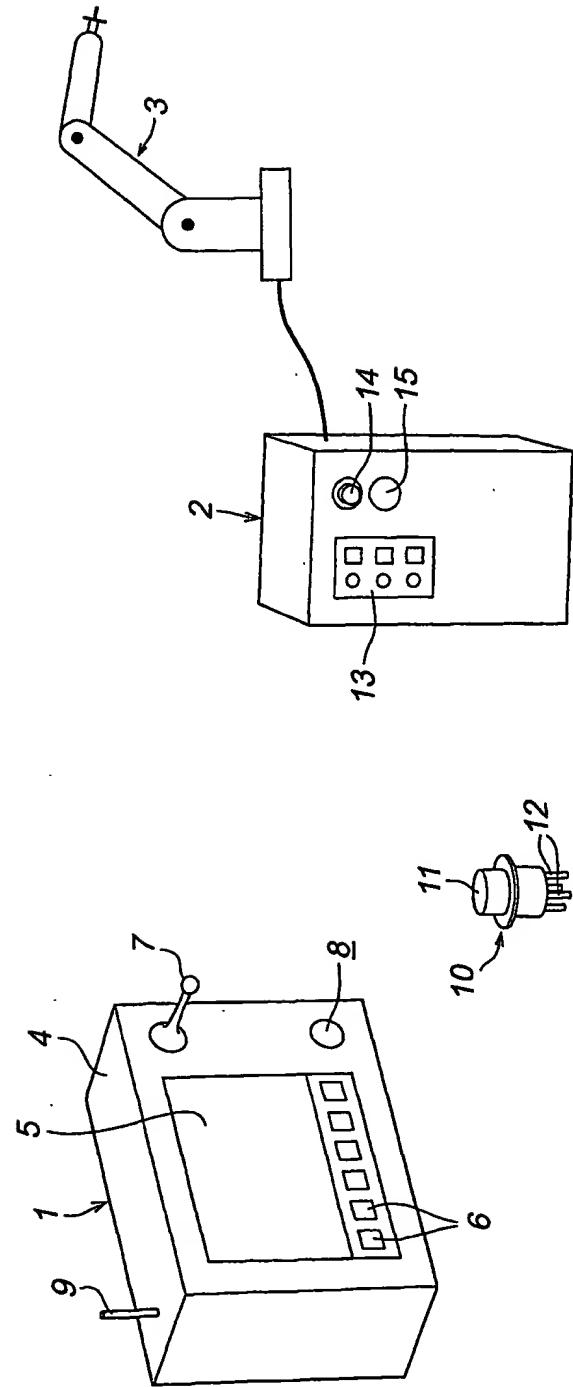


Fig. 1

2/3

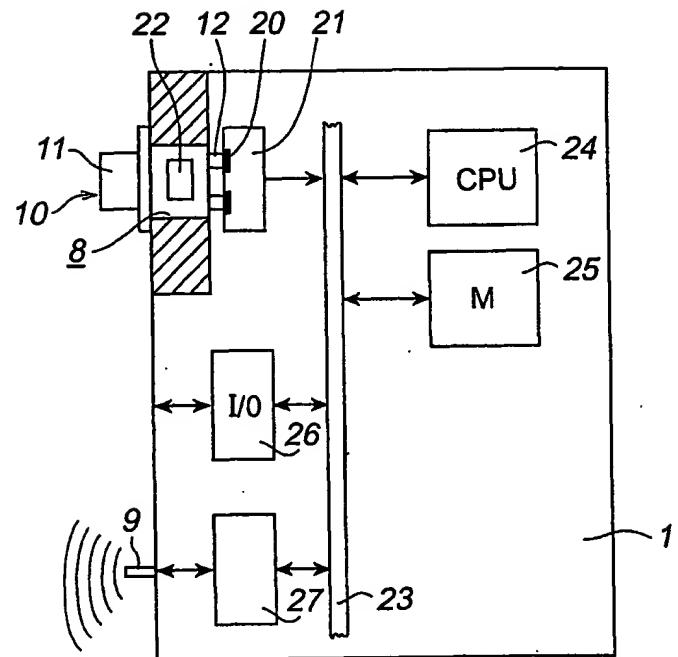


Fig. 2

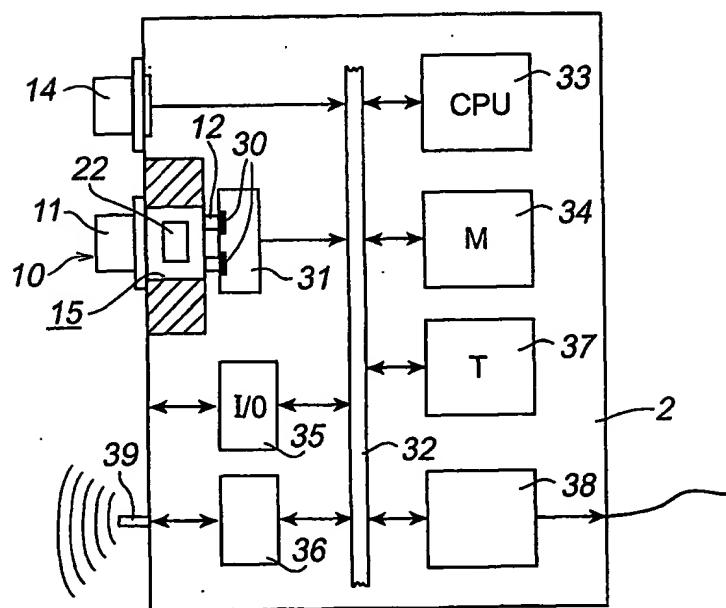


Fig. 3

3/3

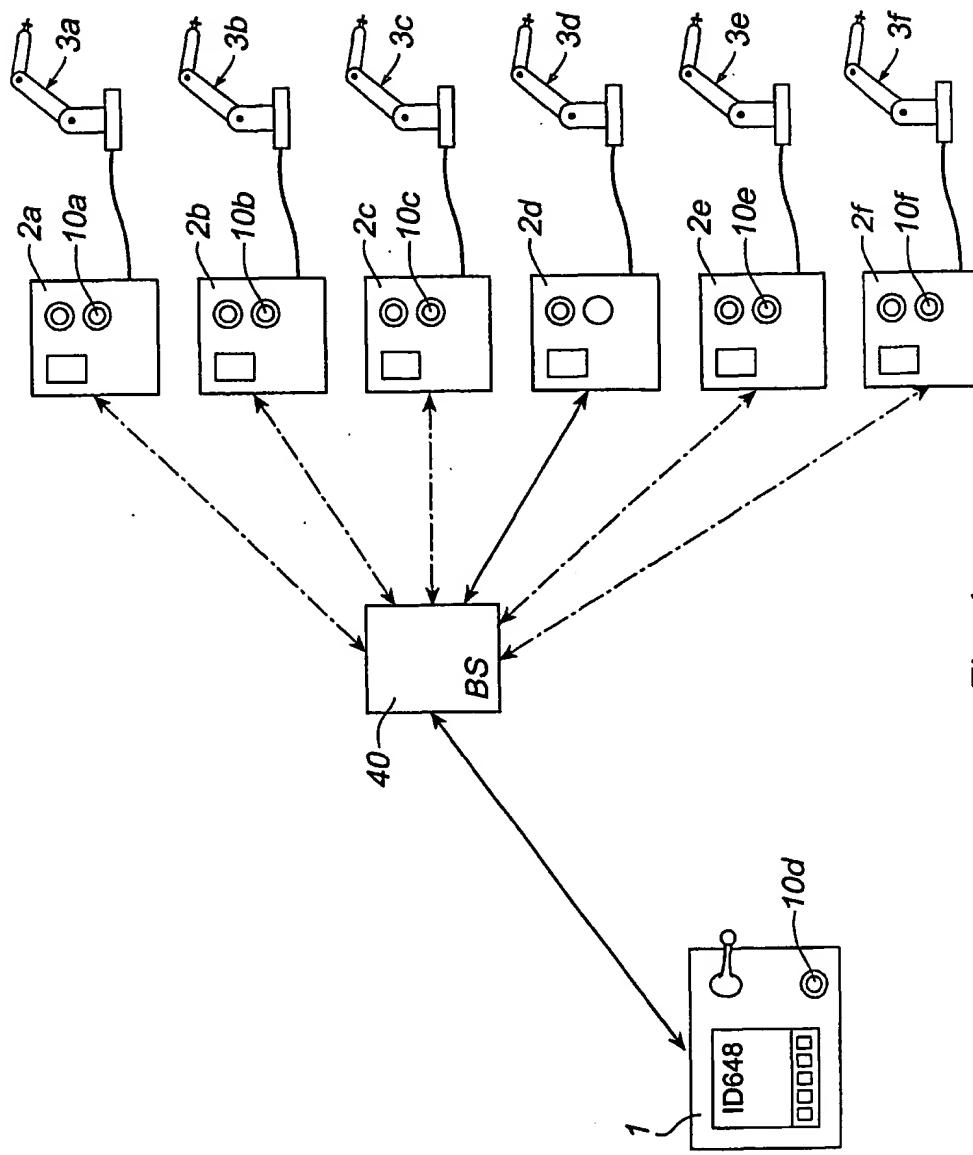


Fig. 4

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

1

International application No.

PCT/SE 02/00644

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC7: B25J 9/00, B25J 9/16, G05B 19/00, G05B 19/42
 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC7: B25J, G05B, B23Q, A63Q, A63G, A63H

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 4888708 A (H, BRANTMARK ET AL), 19 December 1989 (19.12.89), column 2, line 21 - line 30; column 3, line 43 - line 45; column 4, line 16 - line 23, 1i.33-36, col.5, 1i35-44, 1i 60-61, col.6, 1i.39-54, 1i 65-68, col.7, 1i.1-2, fig. 1-2 --	1-30
Y	EP 0536417 A1 (FANUC LTD), 14 April 1993 (14.04.93), column 2, line 29 - line 37; column 3, line 27 - line 30; column 3, line 43 - line 58, col.4, 1i.1-5, fig 1-3 --	1-30

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
1 July 2002	08 -07- 2002
Name and mailing address of the ISA Swedish Patent Office Box 5055, S-102 42 STOCKHOLM Facsimile No. + 46 8 666 02 86	Authorized officer Lars Jakobsson/SN Telephone No. + 46 8 782 25 00

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SE 02/00644

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	EP 0310958 A (HITACH, LTD.), 12 April 1989 (12.04.89), See the whole document -- -----	1-30

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

10/06/02

International application No.

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